
CRUMBS of COMFORT:

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G R A C E

I N I T S

Various Degrees, and yet Oneness
in Kind, *Mat. 14. 27.*

By Mr. WILLIAM GUTHRIE.

THE Doctrine is thus: *Although there is gradual difference in many things in Gods house, yet there is no essential difference among these things: This no man does acknowledge. There was a Feast at the Table, that people may partake of; and there is Crumbs that are not essentially different from these great Loaves; there is some that sits at his Elbow at the Table; and there are others that are but Dogs in their esteem, and yet have a true interest, but creep in among the bearns, and eat the Crumbs that fall from the Table;*

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yet that is essential bread, as well as the great loaves.

1. What be those things of God wherein there is such gradual difference? and wherein doth it appear?

2. We shall shew, though there be a gradual difference, yet there is no essential difference. 3. Why the Lord hath resolv'd to keep such a difference, had it not been much matter, if his Servants had been all one of the same size.

The first thing wherein this appears, there is a difference among the peoples transgressions; so there is a gradual difference among them in the Law-work, which prepares Christs work throughout the Soul: There is some that hath such Convictions, as they can scarcely say, that they have the impression of them upon their heart; and there are some others, who are kept many days under the spirit of bondage, and so weighty upon them, as they were going to hang themselves, or stab themselves, yea some put stone-blind with the terror of conscience; it hath been the mercy of some, that they have not been put upon that extremity. Then there is a difference in the Lords out-giving of saving-grace, yet keeping that rule as they take up, God to be God, and Sin to be sin; yet O, how far are they from that sagacity of Grace and Wisdom that others partake of! the Lord hath given to some to look to Christ, and they dare do no more; but he giveth to others, to receive him in open arms, and he makes out all his receipts with a different proportion, yet no ground of quarrelling: and so it is in all the rest of the Graces; some dare not venture upon suffering, as others; and some gets strength in the temptation to stand.

3. There is a gradual difference in the manifestation of his special communication of his favour and face, the blinks of Gods face : There was some got but such a taste, as scarce did they think any thing at all ; others have got Wine and Apples, and so there is some call'd *babes*, others *young men* for strength, others Fathers for experience : Then there is a gradual difference in promises, made to all these forementioned sizes, which agrees to the person, as an instance to them that hunger, and so are differently moulded according to the Parity.

The second thing is to let you see, that there is no essential difference amongst them, considering the true nature of things themselves, that we have spoken of, to partake in the meanest size ; there is no essential difference from those who partake in the least, or greatest size. First in the Law-work, which makes way throughout the souls of people for Christ ; some has gotten but little of that work, yet such has walk'd afterward ; that they durst not say, but that they had the grace of God, as well as they that have had much of it ; for in both causes there has been a belief of the curse, and appropriation of the curse of the Law to themselves for sin ; then the party from the apprehension of its misery being past hope of all relief from its self, and such a self-discovery, as emptying it self as full room has been for Christ ; and so its call'd *the like precious faith*, but *the like strong* ; so both kind of persons, there is an impropriation of the fulness of Christ to the heart joyn- ing with it, for therein stands the true essence of faith, when the Creator applies Christ in the promises to its cause, although it knows not if it come speed : If it be

so, why do we carp, that we have not so much faith as others ? We have the Essentials of Grace in like manner ; there is no essential difference in the Grace of Love ; for first, is there not that operating Love to put him above all the creatures with an invincible respect to him, that all the waters cannot quench ; he keeps still, in both causes, a regard of his commands upon the heart, upon which the Spirit of God has terminate the love of God, though ye have not that overcoming obedience to the Commands of God.

Then next in the Grace of Patience, there is a gradual difference, though no essential : And I know this troubles much the People of God, that they can be so far different from others in submission, yet dar'st not say that they have no grace ; yet I will let you see, that it is not the meanest degree of patience, that they have given way to Christ throughout their soul, and that they have respect to his Commands, for that must take up the party, for their patience will not do, if that be not ; if ye grant that, then ye must grant this also, that all the Graces of God are in them in habit : so here is a self-judging, and cordial justifying of God, and deliberately submits to him in their cold blood ; and when their heart will not submit, they appeal to God for it. Then hereby ye may apprehend, that there is no essential difference among the Works of Grace, because the promises are equally cast out to all degrees ; so promise is made, as well to him that looks, as to him that eats : this will hold it out, that there is as good account of the meanest degree of gracious receipts, and of the meanest size in difficult cases, and in the day of suffering and testifying for Christs interest, as of a people that
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are of a greater use; and many times the weakest, that we scarcely expected any good account of at their death, hath a better confession of Christ than the greatest professor; and the reason is, Christ has gotten his penny-worths of the man that was so noted for a professor; but a poor body, that was never known, goes away to death, glorifying God to the refreshing of all standers by; then all these different degrees of Grace are the work of one and the same gracious Spirit, and works one and the same graces, and work also gracious ends, that says there is no difference essentially, though there be different administrations and manifestations, and is uniting to him, and so conforming, that all these gracious administrations carry on such an end.

The next thing is, Why doth God keep a gradual difference? may not he keep a great stock of faith, patience and love to keep his people comfortable, than to hold them after this manner? We indeed think so, but he, because the Lord has resolv'd to give out divers Administrations, of which himself is head; and he will have different members of his body, with which he will be served with divers Administrations of the Spirit; he will have eyes, tongue, hands, yea love more than I do, yet I believe more than ye know.

2ly, This gradual difference the Lord keep, that the ransome may be still in request; for if we had gotten in our hand, we should have lost respect to the ransome, the thought of our infirmities, and that we must come to Christ, makes him precious to us.

3ly, He is pleased to keep this diversity of administration, because earth cannot bear grace in its perfection; therefore the Lord hath hewen it out in a small mea-

measure, for the Lord is resolved to transplant all the trees of grace to *Emanuel's* Land, where there is breathing of the Holy Ghost; we would work no more, if Grace were at its perfection.

5ly, The Lord is pleased to do, because he intends that there shall be a clear difference between heaven and earth; O how sweet will Heaven, and Christ, and the fulness of joy at his right hand be to the soul that is never satiate! how sweet will heaven be to him that never could get corruption mortified, but was trailed many a day up and down with it.

Infer. 1. Go not away then with an evil report of him, though ye find not these things in your self, that others of his people has found; and I obtest you to count Crumbs essential bread, though ye get no more at present, make sure of the true nature and being of Grace; make sure, that ye have a respect to his Commands, tho ye cannot get further to any mark of grace. 2. Do not judge with a spirit of jealousy, because ye are not all of the same size; there is some below you in understanding the matters of God; that when it comes to the point, will be as particular in confession of the truth as any. 5. Be not censorious, though any with many degrees shall fall into corruption. But then again, if he that has but grace in the third degree, come honourably thorough-out, not polluted with the temptation, how aggravating is thy sin? who has received grace in the sixth degree? But be it known to you, that it is not degrees of grace that holds up grace to fight with corruption and temptation, with desertion, but the Sovereignty that makes it stand; for if it were the degrees of grace that keep a man up, how comes it that he who has the lively exercise of grace,

grace, he is almost overcome of a temptation, and foiled in an evil frame, and grace at under with him, that he is run down with corruption: Truly none can give a reason for it, but he who has set bound to the Sea, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further*; hath set bounds to a mans corruptions, that such a length it shall come, and no further; therefore listen much to God and his Sovereignty, and very little to your own receipts of grace, yea in the highest degree that men do create, and that with influences of the spirit. 7. That the gradual degrees of grace and parts is not founded upon disproportion of natural proprieties. 8. Grace runs in that channel, that most in forthcoming, where least expected: and this because they are come of an evil kind, and evil edification, and so few means of grace, and so little professions; and yet all of these good symptoms of a choice Christian. 9. For ground of encouragement, the Masters honour and glory, and our well-being is winded up, that is, our standing stedfast in an evil time, and is the accomplishment of all the greatest promises in the word, since we have many sweet clouds and showers of prayers in behalf of those who own the truths of God; and if we were not more beholden to other mens prayers than our own, we should be in a poor case; but there will be forthcoming in many, beyond expectation, in respect of solid acknowledgment, and bearing witness to the truths of God in a declining time, when people, when great parts will fail: but there will be rich forthcoming in point of faith; it's easie believing, when no opposition; to call the Court, when none calls again; but those who durst never much say great things, they would do, will exceedingly transcend great lights in testimony-bearing. 10. There will

will be forthcoming, in point of Charity to suffering worthy Ministers, and others of his people in strait for him : and I assure you, that this is not the least piece of Religion. But 4. as the reason why God takes this way, because it's most usual, that way which we pitch on, and that person we esteem and mean elect ; the Lord trusts it, and it's a hundred to one and ever he proceed that road way. Now you that are great professors in the Countrey, pray you desire not tryals ; people says, that they will do this, and that, and the other thing, when call'd to it : away with your Romances. 5. We have much hope of some peoples praise, faithfulness and honesty, who have little or none of themselves. Be not then upon no terms casten to a dispondency, when the matter comes to a choak, because ye have nothing promising in you answerable thereto, for he gives out the expences immediately, when we are call'd to disburse, and least expecting it.

Lastly, The eminent shining-professors, let fear of shame, disgrace, dishonour to your self and Master promote you to be forthcoming for the Masters praise, in word, thought and deed, and to be practical in patience, temperance, holiness, and summarily make it all your work, how ye may be to his glory, who has taken so much pains upon you.